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ABSTRACT

The life story of Esther Burnett Horne records the memories and experiences of a Native woman born in 1909, who was both pupil and teacher in Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools. An introduction by Sally McBeth examines methodological and cultural concerns of collecting and co-authoring a life history. In Chapter 1, Essie begins with oral traditions about her ancestor Sacajawea, whose life she uses to make sense of her own. Chapter 2 covers the runaway marriage of her Scottish-Irish father and Shoshone mother, early family life homesteading in Idaho, her parents' appreciation of both their cultures, and early education in a one-room school. After the death of her father, Essie and her siblings were sent to Haskell Indian Institute (Kansas), where Essie attended high school and junior college. Chapter 3 describes socialization at Haskell, military routine, physical layout of the campus, academic instruction, weekend activities, significant teachers, and the "outing system"--summer employment in White homes. Chapter 4 describes Essie's first teaching position at Eufaula Boarding School (Oklahoma) and her marriage in 1929. From 1930 to 1965, Essie taught at Wahpeton Indian School (North Dakota), where she was the only Indian teacher and a parent figure to the students. Chapters 5-6 cover her teaching experiences at Wahpeton and continuing education, changing institutional attitudes toward Indian education, and participation in the Lewis and Clark sesquicentennial and a White House conference on children and youth. Final chapters discuss her activities in retirement and thoughts on education, activism, feminism, grandmothering, Indian identity, spirituality, and death. Appendices include "The Editing Process: Examples of the Transition from Spoken Word to Written Text" (Sally McBeth); awards, honors, and publications of Esther Burnett Horne; and "Memories of Sacajawea" (Esther Burnett Horne). Contains over 300 references, notes, photographs, and an index. (SV)

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